

Samples of Student Writing

Following are writing samples that have been annotated to illustrate the criteria required to meet the Common Core State Standards for particular types of writing—argument, informative/explanatory text, and narrative—in a given grade. Each of the samples exhibits at least the level of quality required to meet the Writing standards for that grade.

The range of accomplishment within each grade reflects differences in individual development as well as in the conditions under which the student writers were expected to work. Some of the samples were written in class or as homework; others were written for on-demand assessments; still others were the result of sustained research projects. Where possible, each sample includes information about the circumstances under which it was produced. The samples come from students in kindergarten through grade 12. The students attended school in a number of states and districts across the country.

At the lower grades, the samples include “opinion” writing, an elementary type of argument in which students give reasons for their opinions and preferences. Because reasons are required, such writing helps prepare students for drafting the arguments they will be expected to create beginning in grade 6.

Acknowledgment

The Standards work group would like to express its appreciation to teachers and students at Monte Vista High School in California and the Randolph Technical Career Center in Vermont; other colleagues in California, Massachusetts, and Washington state; and ACT, Inc., and the *Concord Review*, who helped find and obtain permission for several of the samples included in the set. The group also would like to express its appreciation to the New Standards Project and to the International Reading Association, which allowed the use of several samples from their publications, and to the other student writers who granted permission to reproduce their work here.

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Permissions

The following student writing samples have been reprinted for the Common Core State Standards Initiative with the express permission of the following organizations and individuals.

ACT, Inc.:

Untitled essay on dress codes

California Department of Education:

“Football”; “Miss Sadie”

The *Concord Review*:

“In the Wake of the Spanish Lady: American Economic Resilience in the Aftermath of the Influenza Epidemic of 1918” by Brooke Granowski, *Concord Review*, 20(1), 203–216 (©2009 Concord Review, Inc.)

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education:

“Dear Mr. Sandler”; “A Pet Story About My Cat . . . Gus”; “Animal Farm”

Monte Vista High School in California:

“The True Meaning of Friendship”; “Lives on Mango, Rides the Whale”; untitled essay on civil disobedience in India; “Marching to His Own Beat”; “Summary of Key Points”

The National Center on Education and the Economy, on behalf of New Standards:

“My fabit Book is do you Want to be my FRIEND”; “Fraggs (Frogs)”; “I Went to Disnand”; “My Big Book About Spain”; “I bot a little cotton ball”; “Owl Moon”; “My first tooth is gone”; “Horses”; “When my Puppys Ranaway”; “Zoo Field Trip”; “Author Response: Roald Dahl”; “Getting Shot and Living Through It”; “A Geographical Report”; “The Old Man and the Sea”; “_____ School Bond Levy”

Randolph Technical Career Center in Vermont:

“Wood Joints”; “TIG/GTAW Welding”

Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction:

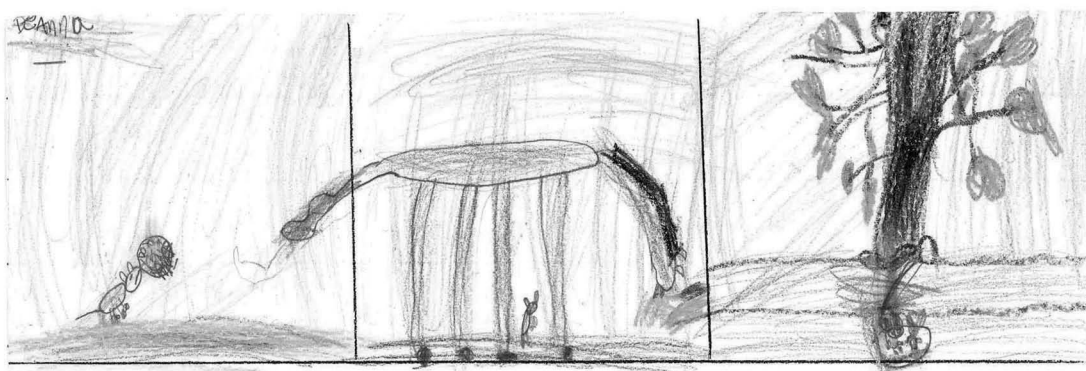
“Glowing Shoes”; “Video Cameras in Classrooms”

Permission to reprint each of the following samples was granted by its author:

“Freedom From Structure”; “Fact vs. Fiction and All the Grey Space in Between”; “The Making of a Human Voice and How to Use It”

Student Sample: K, Argument (Opinion)

This opinion piece about a work of literature was produced in class.



my fabit ^{Book} is do you Want to be my FRIEND.
 the mas as the hos if you will
 be my FRIEND the hos said No. the
 mas said a FRIEND the mas as the
 lat mas if you will be my FRIEND
 the lat mas said Yes thex
 dig a hol in the gal. my
 fait ^{pot} is the hos

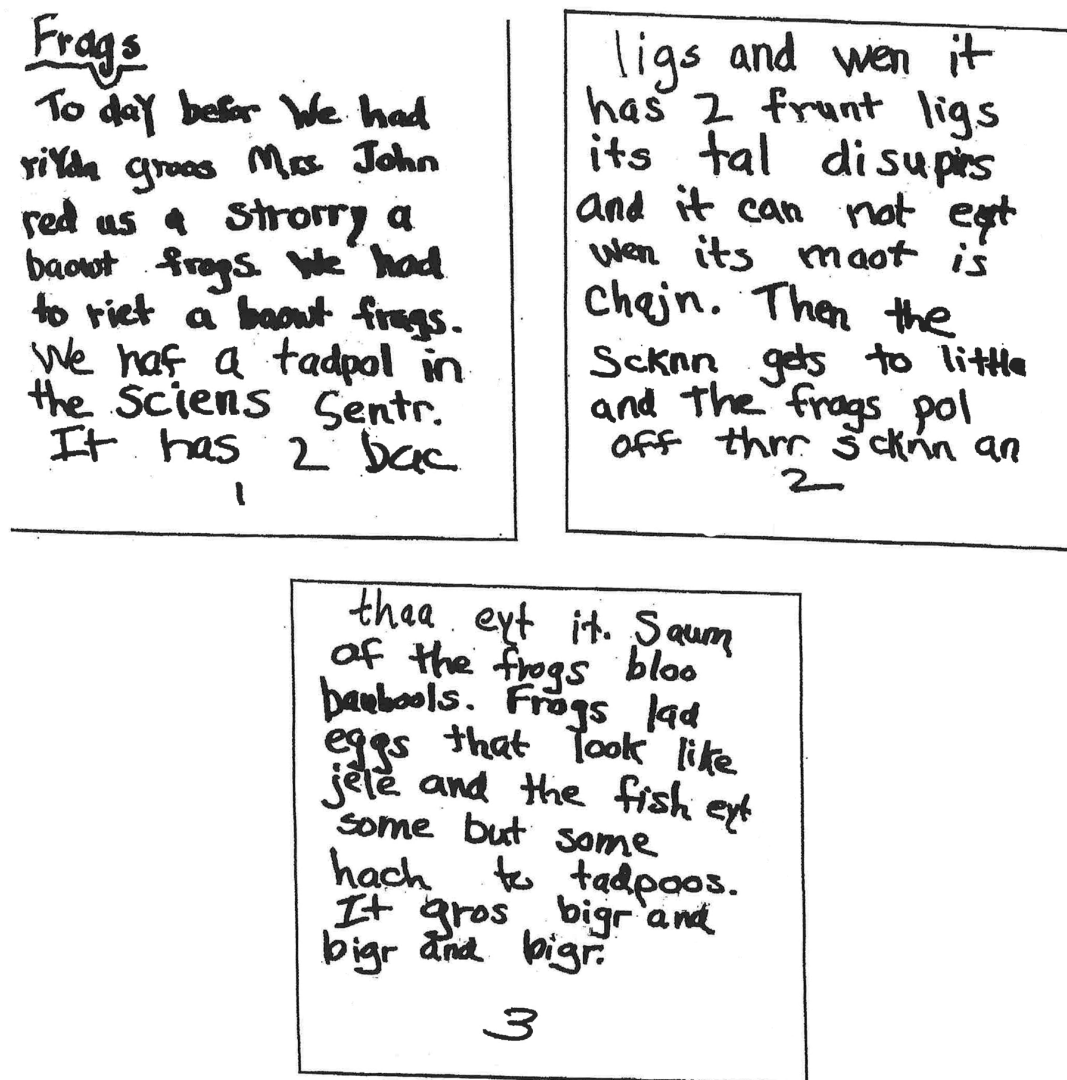
Annotation

The writer of this piece

- tells the reader the name of the book (in the title of the paper).
 - My fabit (favorite) Book is do you Want to be my FRIEND
- states an opinion or preference about the book.
 - ... my fait (favorite) pot (part) is the hos (horse)

Student Sample: K, Informative/Explanatory

This informative report was produced in class, and the writer received support from the teacher.



Annotation

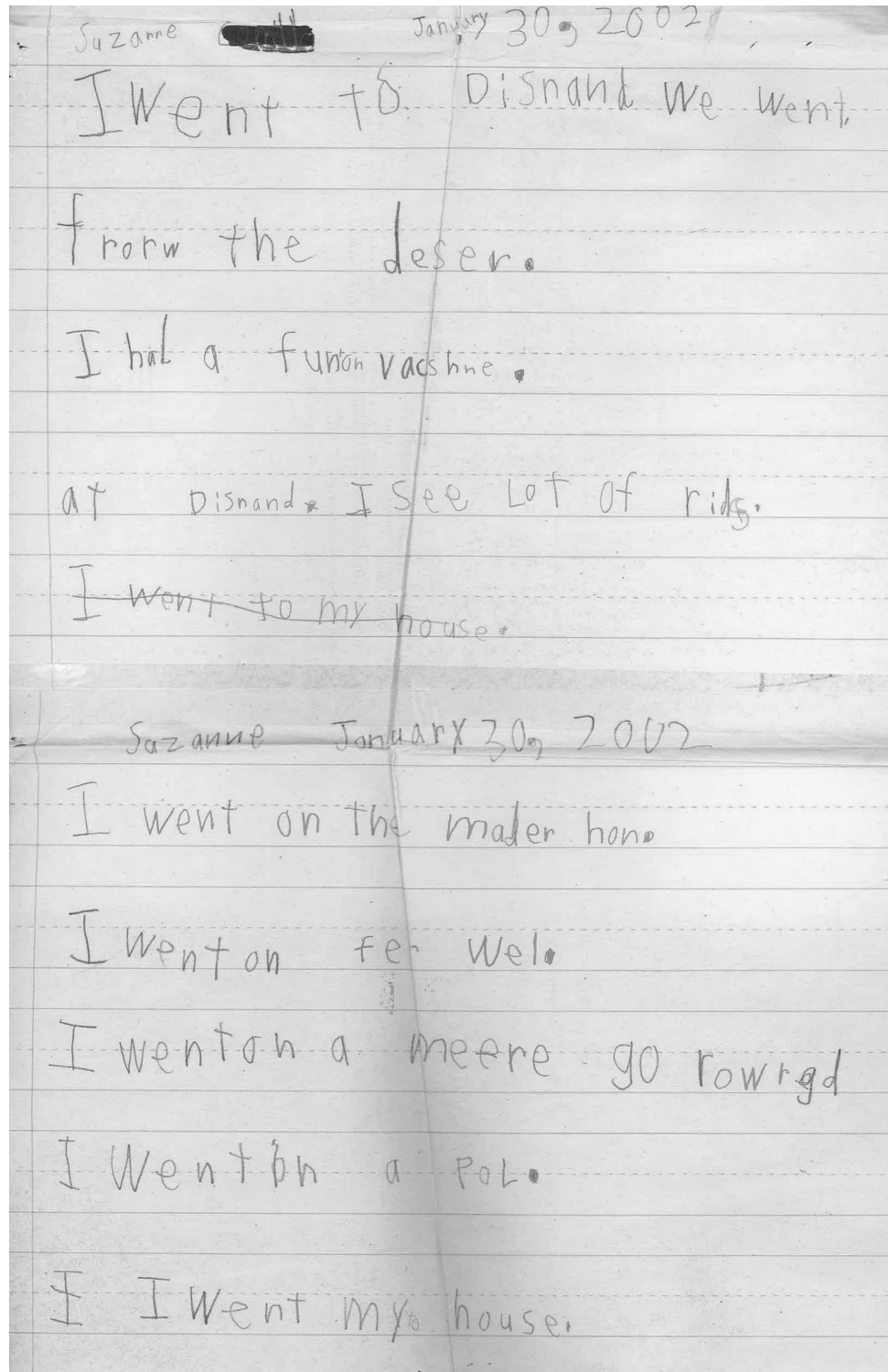
The writer of this piece

- establishes the topic in a title and goes beyond the title to create a context for writing about frogs.
 - To day befor (before) We had riyda (writing) groos (groups) Mrs. _____ red (read) us a strorry (story) a baowt (about) frogs.
- supplies some information about the topic.
 - It has 2 bac (back) ligs (legs) and wen (when) it has 2 frunt (front) ligs (legs) its tal (tail) disupirs (disappears) . . . Then the scknn (skin) gets to (too) little and the frags pol (pull) off thrr (their) scknn (skin) . . .
 - Frogs lad (laid) eggs that look like jele (jelly) . . .

- **uses additive (adversative and temporal) linking words.**
 - *... and wen (when) ... Then ... but ...*
- **provides a sense of closure.**
 - *It gros (grows) bigr (bigger) and bigr and bigr.*
- **demonstrates command of some of the conventions of standard written English.**
 - As a kindergartener, the writer demonstrates remarkable control of the conventions of standard written English. As this was a process piece, it is reasonable to assume that the writer received feedback to correct possible errors with capital letters and periods.

Student Sample: K, Narrative

This narrative is a process piece that was produced in class.



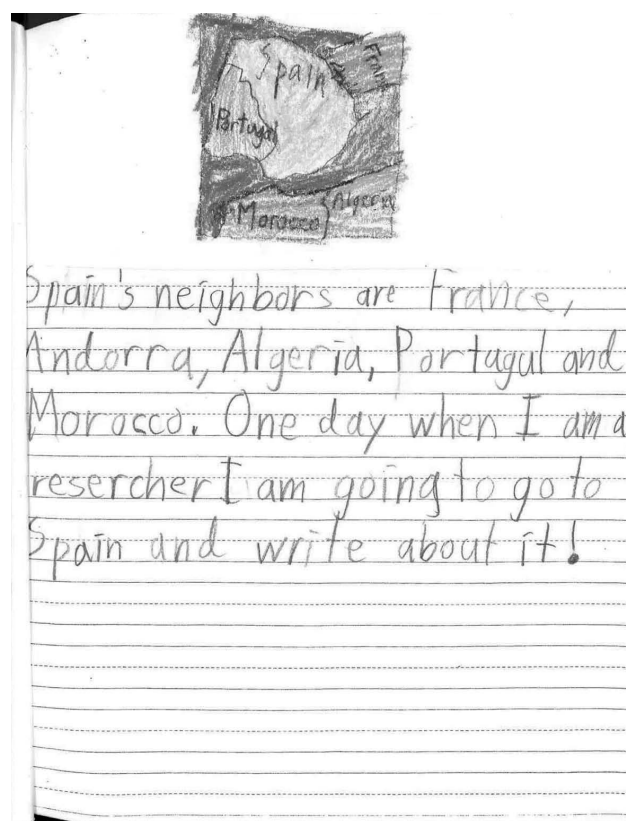
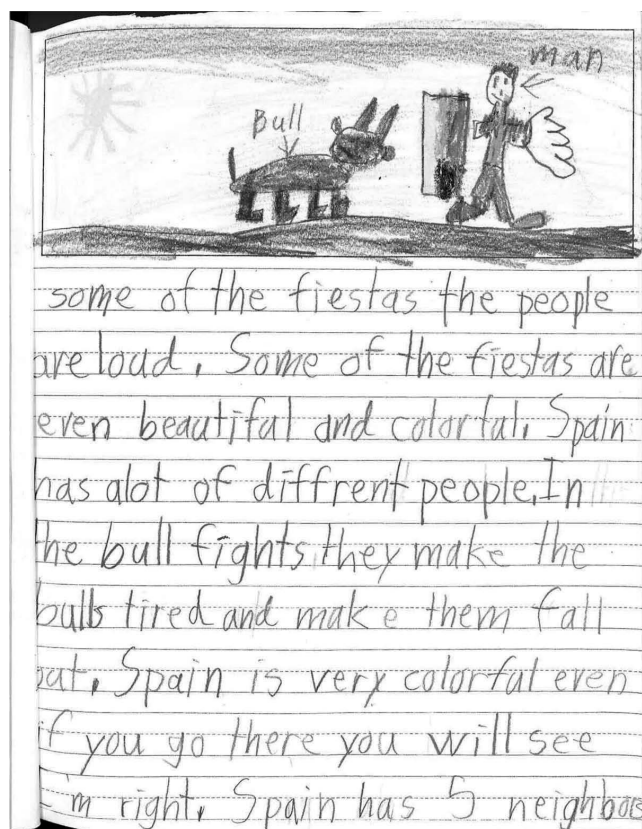
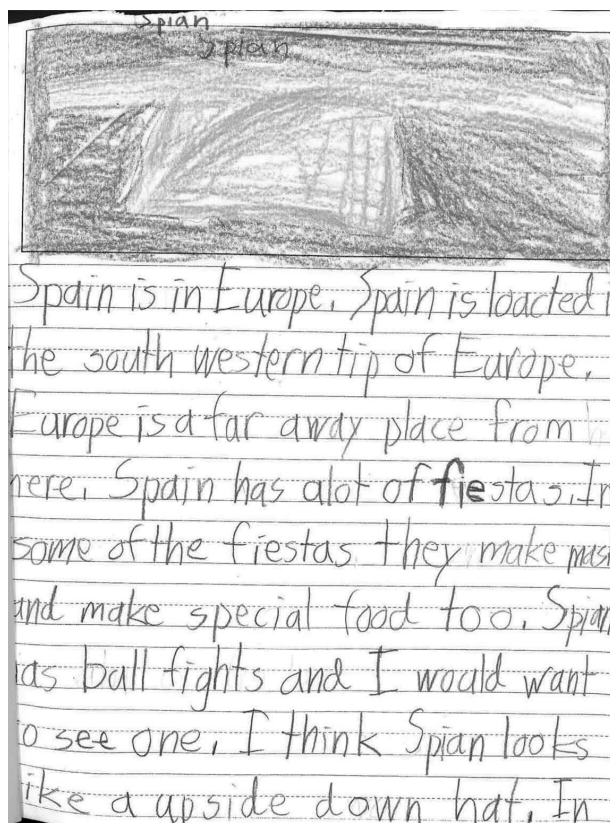
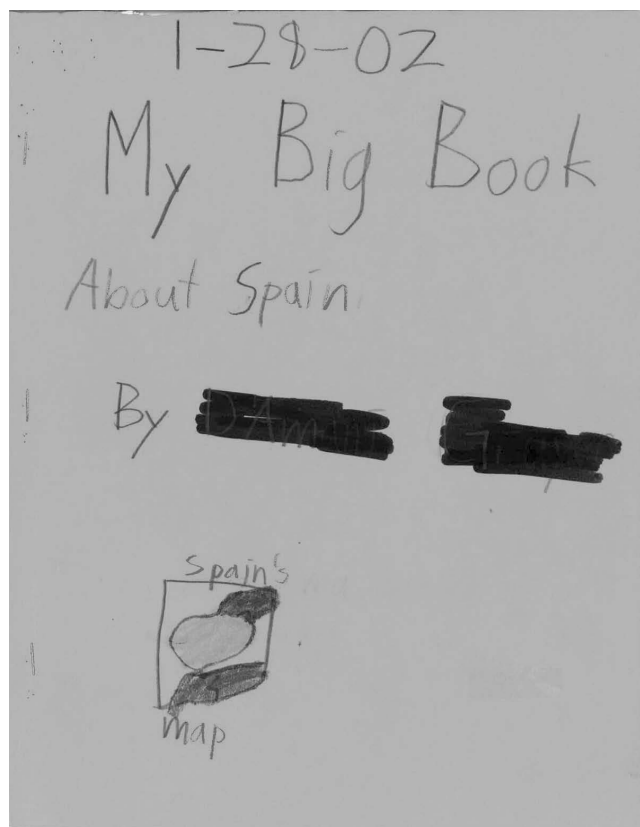
Annotation

The writer of this piece

- **establishes a situation by naming a place.**
 - *Disnand* (Disneyland)
- **recounts several loosely linked events and the order in which they occurred.**
 - *I had a fun on vacshne* (vacation). . . . *I see lot* (lots) *of rids* (rides). *I went on the mader hon* (Matterhorn). . . . *I went my house*.
- **provides a reaction to what happened.**
 - *I had a fun on vacshne* (vacation).
- **offers a sense of closure.**
 - *I went my house*.
- **demonstrates command of some of the conventions of standard written English.**
 - This piece illustrates consistent control of beginning-of-sentence capitalization and end-of-sentence punctuation. The writer also uses capital letters appropriately in the title of the piece.

Student Sample: Grade 1, Informative/Explanatory

This informative report was produced in class.




Annotation

The writer of this piece

- **names the topic (in the title).**
 - *My Big Book About Spain*
- **supplies some facts about the topic.**
 - *Spain is loacted (located) in the south western tip of Europe.*
 - *Spain has alot of fiestas.*
 - *Spian . . . has bull fights . . .*
 - *Spain's neighbors are France, Andorra, Algeria, Portugal and Morocco.*
- **provides some sense of closure.**
 - *One day when I am a researcher I am going to go to Spain and write about it!*
- **demonstrates command of some of the conventions of standard written English.**
 - This piece illustrates the writer's awareness of beginning-of-sentence capitalization and end-of-sentence punctuation as well as the use of capital letters for proper nouns.

Student Sample: Grade 1, Narrative

This narrative is a process piece that was produced in class.



I bot a little cotton ball
Jason
2-2002

Dad came home he sedi was is that.
Noys it is my hamster I sedi my
mom sedi probly the ppl he bot
this hamster was poble men to
her. I did't want to ratern her.
Becaus she was so soft I and cuddley.
She felt lika little cotton ball.

I went to biye a hamster
I was so excited I woted to run.
All the waye there but I did't
wont to get run over I got a
Very nerves hamster but we
bot her then at nite when my

Annotation

The writer of this piece

- **establishes the situation with the opening sentence.**
 - I went to biye (buy) a hamster . . .
- **recounts two or more appropriately sequenced events.**
 - I got a. Very nerves (nervous) hamster . . . then at nite (night) when my. Dad came home
- **includes some detail regarding what happened.**
 - I was so excited I woted (wanted) to run. All the waye (way) there . . .
- **uses temporal words to signal event order (though the writer does not consistently include them).**
 - **then** at nite (night) **when** my. Dad came home he sedi (said) was (what) is that. Noys (noise) . . .
- **provides some sense of closure.**
 - I Did't (didn't) wont (want) to ratern (return) her. Becaus she was so soft and cuddley (cuddly). She felt lik (like) a little cotton ball.

- **demonstrates growing command of the conventions of standard written English.**
 - There is some evidence in this piece that the writer understands various uses of capital letters: frequently sentences begin with a capital letter, and the pronoun I is consistently capitalized. (However, with the exception of the pronoun I, there are no capital letters in the title.) Periods end some sentences but not all and are sometimes introduced in unconventional places.